Murder Can Be Fun

no. 9/10 **$1.50**

Karen Carpenter

She's skinny ☆☆☆ She's sexy

She's dead

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Yes, I admit, this issue is late. I say, when I start making enough to quit my job, it'll be on time. Until then, first things first -- knees & elbows, books, $$$. Patience, kids, patience. This still is the amateur press.

Actually, I haven't been that bad. Since #8, my teen advice book review booklet, Anti-Sex Tips For Teens, came out. In case you're wonder ing, it was not included with subscriptions. More like a side-project that will cost you extra. I also laid the groundwork for the 1989 Datebook. Again, not included with subs, but $2 reserves you a copy & protects you against any price increases. (And you never know what can happen, between spiralling postage and paper costs). Forewarned is forearmed -- last year's Datebook was a complete sellout.

On to mundane business. Most subs die with this issue. You'll see a big red RENEW by your label if so, and if you're smart, you will. Future issues will be nice & thick like this one at $1 each. And, I'm pleased to announce I NOW ACCEPT CHECKS, MONEY ORDERS, BANK DRAFTS, and of course, stamps & cash. Still working on Visa & American Express.

#11 will be a special I ♡ DISASTERS issue, demonstrating once & for all that it isn't nice to mess with Mother Nature. There've been so many great disasters, it'll be hard to pick. Right now, I'm leaning towards the Great Boston Molasses Flood and the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire as well as much, much more. Due to the extra pages, I can even consider CONTRIBUTIONS! Is the first step to fame and fortune the pages of MCBF? Probably not, but drop me a line anyway.

One final note. Normally, I avoid recommending movies like the plague, but every MCBF reader must go out immediately & see "Superstar", an art film by Todd Haynes. It tells the story of this issue's cover girl, using Barbie dolls (!!!) instead of actors & actresses. Incredibly bizarre, wild, & expertly done. Hurry, hurry, hurry, before the Carpenter's lawyers sue.

MCBF Update...

It's been a long time, a lot have things have happened, but two things really stand out. First, way, way back in Febuary, one Richard Farley, a computer programmer at ESL, a Sunnyvale high-tech company, grew irate over a fellow employee's chilling reception to his romantic advances. How chilling? She got a court order for the guy to lay off — he just would not take no for an answer. And how irate? Well, one fine morning, he shows up at work, armed to the teeth, & firing at anything that moves. Killed a few, wounded a few (including his heart's des ire) & shot out every single PC screen in the building. Surely the dream of disgruntled programmers everywhere. Cops finally lured him out with food, specifically a soda & a #26 from the Togo's across the street. Check it out — go into the Moffet Park branch of Togo's & ask 'em for a Farley special — see what kind of reaction you get.

Other item of interest was this year's Bay-to-Breakers race, wherein several thousand San Franciscans get up at an ungodly hour to dress like fools, run across the city, & cause terrible traffic jams. Spicing the event up this year were the deaths of 2 runners close to the finish line , of heart attacks, natch.

Now, to update items from past MCBFs. Sadly, Charles Willeford (#8) has died, just as he was starting to get ¼ of the attention he'd deserved for the last 30 years. A biography of Cornell Woolrich (#6), FIRST YOU DREAM, THEN YOU DIE should be out soon.... Virtually all of Jim Thompson's books (#5) are back in print, with even a collection of previously unreprinted shorts, FIREWORKS, in the stores. Thompson makes Willeford look lucky... Rumours about a Typhoid Mary (#6) book, with alert reader sending in an excellent a rticle by the would-be author from M.D. magazine... Andy Warhol, of course, is dead, but it still doesn't look like Valerie Solanas's legendary new book will make it into print... does it even exist?

And finally, V.C. Andrews (#3) is showing an amazing talent for prolifically writing after death. Post mortem titles are now up to 3 (pair of sequels to HEAVEN, a 'prequel' to FLOWERS IN THE ATTIC), &, like all VC Andrews titles, these books are thick. Handily the sort of thing you find lying around among the deceased's effects. Plot becomes thicker when you notice that no mention is made of the fact that the author is dead. Has Pocket found a 'ghost' VC? And are they regretting that full page "In Memorium" ad in PUBLISHER'S WEEKLY?

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Karen Carpenter

Superstar

Traditionally, death has been a sure-fire way of reviving a fading rock star's career. From Johnny Ace & Otis Redding to Elvis Presley & John Lennon, a dead rockstar's been worth more than a live one. It's the ultimate publicity stunt. You might even suspect record company execs of helping matters along a little bit: "Sure, we'll fill those precriptions"; "Sure, we'll fly you to gigs".

But, when Karen Carpenter died of a heart attack brought on by anorexia nervosa in 1983, it meant more than a spurt of CARPENTERS record sales. Suddenly, THE CARPENTERS were cool!

Until then, no "with-it" person would be caught dead listening to them. This was the band with the squeaky-clean Mom& Apple Pie (?) that Richard Nixom proclaimed as "Young America at it's very best". Critics slagged them. In spite of 16 gold singles, ROLLING STONE virtually ignored their records. Definitely an uncool band.

But, let the truth behind the All-American facade out. Dominating parents. An Autocratic older brother. A 25-year old millionaire, living with Mom & Dad. And, ultimately, a nine-year long rebellion via ritual self-starvation & abuse of laxatives; a rebellion that had to be hidden from the public AT ALL COSTS. Have to keep up that front, y'know so Ma & Pa Kettle of Podunk will keep buying records made by "those nice Carpenter kids". Suddenly, "Close To You" starts sounding a little sinister, & "Rainy Days & Mondays" downright catchy!

The red letter day was Febuary 4, 1983. She'd just completed a year-long therapy program which, combined with 2 months of IV feeding, had brought her weight back up to 108#. She'd spent the previous night in the room her parents still kept for her visits to their Downey home. She was planning to go shopping with her mother that day for a new wardrobe, & wanted to get an early start.

While getting dressed at 9:AM, she collapsed. Her mother discovered her & immediatly called the paramedics. Even though they detected a slight pulse, it was too late. She was DOA at the hospital at 9:51.

That was the end. As for the beginning, it's hard to pin point. Karen's first fast? First diet? First record contract? But, since anorexia seems to be directly related to the family situation, let's go way back, to the roots of THE CARPENTERS.

Karen & big brother (by 4 years) Richard were the only children of Harold & Agnes Carpenter. It was a typical, close-

knit lower-middle class family; Dad was a printer, Mom a homemaker, & brother & sister... well, they were just close. Even as a little girl, Karen looked up to & admired her big brother.

Richard started music lessons at 12 & was soon recognized as being a real talent. At 16, while the family was still living in New Haven, he was studying the piano at Yale, & playing in a "horrible" band on weekends.

The family moved to Downey, CA in 1963 when Richard was a senior in high school. After graduating, he went on to study music at USC & Cal State Long Beach. And, of course, he kept on playing in various bands.

Karen was eager to follow in her brother's footsteps, so, around 1967, when she was 16, she took up the drums. This resulted in THE CARPENTERS TRIO, a jazz instrumental group featuring Richard on piano, Karen on drums, & a friend on bass & tuba. They played a mix of covers & originals, including a Richard-penned tune "Ice Tea", & won a Hollywood Bowl Battle of the Bands. This led to a brief recording contract with RCA. However, nothing was ever released.

By then, the Carpenters were dead set on a musical career. With their parent's help, they were buying equipment, taping demos, & looking for that Big Break: a real record deal. Karen started to sing, but a 6-piece 1968 group SPECTRUM still went no where. At one point, Richard was reduced to singing on Main Street in Disneyland while wearing a 1900-style ice-cream man suit. Although both Carpenters were still living at home, the constant equipment & production expenses were taking their toll.

Finally, in 1969, the break came. By then, they were just a duo -- THE CARPENTERS. Through a friend of a friend, one of their demo tapes came to the attention of Herb Alpert of A&M. Stars were about to be born.

☆ ☆

It didn't happen that fast, though. Their first album, "Offering", featuring the #45 without-a-bullet single "Ticket To Ride", laid an egg. But Alpert was patient. He sensed that there was room for soemthing soft in the acid/hard rock saturated market.

The breakthrough came in 1970, with the song & album "Close To You". Originally recorded by Dionne Warwick in 1964, there are different stories how THE CARPENTERS would up with it. One claimed Richard heard it on a bank commercial; another has composer Burt Bacharach trying to foist in on Alpert himself. No matter. It was a monster, the first of 16 consecutive hit singles. Within the space of a few months, the CARPENTERS went from opening for ENGLEBERT HUMPERDINK to headlining. Over the next 6 years, they were one of the most successful acts in pop. All their albums were gold. They won 3 Grammies & one Oscar. They appeared on "The Dating Game" & "This Is Your Life". The only thing they didn't get was hip critical respect.

Yet all was not joy in Carpenterville. In a 1974 interview (the only really major interview they ever did), ROLLING STONE writer Tom Nolan wrote: "The CARPENTERS have real pressures & problems, hard feelings & confusions which few associate with the image of the group...".

Number one of the strains was undoubtably Mom & Dad. As late as 1974, with both junior Carpenters millionaires & owners of shopping malls & apartment complexes, they continued to live with their parents. Mom & Dad were the dominant figures in their world, &, along with publicity people, sheltered them & controlled them.

And it was even worse for Karen. Not only did she have Mom & Dad to obey & please, but also Richard. From the beginning, Richard was the genius, Richard was the boss, Richard called the shots. People remarked that "It always seemed as if she were under his thumb." Karen was the most prominent thing about the CARPENTERS -- her voice made the group standout, and she got the bulk of the fan mail. But when it came to interviews, Richard did all the talking (just as he did the producing, the arranging, the songwriting -- just about everything but singing lead). Only occaisonally did she say anything, & often it was just something like "My taste naturally evolved from what Richard liked, I was totally into whatever he was into".

Both also had to labor at the almost impossible task of living up to their goody-two shoes image. Richard, for one, admitted to favoring the legalization of marijuana, and believing in pre-marital sex. Karen was known to use to "F-word" on occasion & had a few romances of her own. They were in a hard place. On one hand, they wanted to tone down the clean image to something more livable, but when they did, people immediatly accused them of all sorts of degeneracy. They couldn't even touch each other in publicity photos for a while to avoid charges of incest.

In a way, Karen's anorexia was almost inevitable. She was locked in on all sides,by people demanding to be pleased -- parents, brother, managers, fans. She had to be "The Best Little Girl In The World" -- but there was still one way she could fight back.

She had been a little overweight as a teenager. At 17, she went on the Stillman diet and, under a doctor's supervision, lost about 20#s, down to 120#. She was ok until the early '70s, when she decided to lose more weight, allegedly because a reviewer had referred to her as "chubby". A succession of diets failed until she discovered the ultimate one: a combination of starvation & laxatives.

☆ ☆

CARPENTERS

CARPENTERS

Her eating habits were so strange that every writer commented on them. Nolan, in the '74 ROLLING STONE piece, notes that "While everyone else at dinner (including her brother) was enjoying the sumptuous pasta, she had before her a simple green salad and iced tea. She was, as usual, on a diet". A fan-club article from about the same time complimented her: "Her will power is tremendous. At dinners & parties, while those around her indulge in rich, high calorie foods, she faithfully sticks to low-calorie items". Salads seem to have been the staple of her diet, along with iced tea & the occasional piece of toast.

In 1975, it was obvious that something was severely wrong. Her weight had dropped from 110# to 90#, and she still refused to eat. Richard recalls, "I tried every method I knew to get her to eat. I would scold her & she would say I was getting upset over nothing". Her voice was never affected, but her appearence was; at times, people described her as a 'living skull' & Richard remembered the "gasps from the audience when she came on stage".

After the Summer '75 tour, Karen was on the point of collapse. The European & Japanese tours were cancelled. She spent 5 days resting in a hospital, & 2 months in bed at her parent's house.

She seemed to improve, though she was still way underweight. In 1976, she finally moved out of Mom & Dad's to her own condo in Century City (Richard moved to a house in Downer a few years before). However, the CARPENTER'S hot streak had run out. Their 1977 album, "Passage" was their first not to go gold.

Here, things are mysterious. Richard claims that he was tired of the non-stop touring & recording & wanted to take time off, though it seems like Karen needed it more. Karen supposedly spent this year off working on a solo album. Yet, in spite of the long time she worked on it, it was never released. Was

this really just a cover for therapy?

During this slack period, she also got married to real estate developer Tom Burris. They separated in 1982, after 2 years of marriage. Although never publicized, the reason for the breakup was probably her anorexia.

In 1982, Karen finally admitted to herself that something was really wrong which called for drastic measures. The year before, she had chatted with recovered anorexic Cherry Boone, Pat Boone's daughter. Acting on her advice, she moved to New York, getting completely away from her personal & professional life, & enrolled in therapy with Dr. Steven Levenkron (better known as the author of THE BEST LITTLE GIRL IN THE WORLD and KESSA).

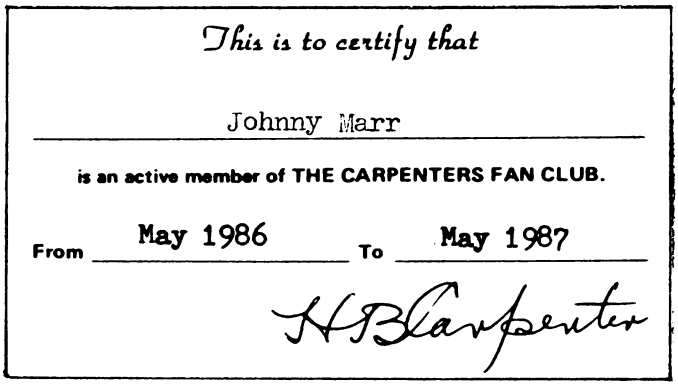
Under Levenkron's care, which included IV feeding, she went from 85# to 105#, still slim, but at least livable. After a year of treatment, she was able to return home for Thanksgiving, 1982. Levenkron was confident that she was cure, and so was she. Before leaving, she presented him with a needlepoint sampler she'd stiched -- "You win -- I gain".

But the signs were still there that she wasn't quite right. While in New York, she'd developed a mania for exercise, and bought 30 pairs of jogging shoes. At Thanksgiving dinner, Richard still felt uneasy: she was "picking at food, & there were certain rituals in eating".

From November until her death in Febuary, she spoke with Levenkron on the phone 2 or 3 times a week. Each time, she assured him that yes, she was eating well, and no, she was not doing laxatives. But she left outthe stuff that probably killed her: syrup of ipecac.

Ipecac is a standard home medicine used for inducing vomiting when poison has been swallowed. It's also good for making anything else that you regret swallowing come back up, like food. Unfortunately, not only is it poisonous, but it also needs to be taken in increasing doses by the regular user. Although it isn't certain, it appears that Karen was downing up to 2 bottles a day of the stuff to maintain her weight. The result -- cardiotoxicity, & the final heart attack at age 32.

In the end, it wasn't "You win -- I gain", but "I gain -- I lose". In her own way, Karen had lived up to her All-American image. She was skinny , young American Womanhood at its finest. Too bad it was also its fatalist.



Unfortunately, both the Carpenter Fan Club & the Karen Carpenter Fan Club are also defunct.

The BEAST of the Belfrey

The mild-mannered middle class man turned murderer has always been especially fascinating. When a big, drunk, low-life lout goes on an axe rampage, he'll only make the front page if he unwittingly stumbles upon an exceptionally disgusting technique. Hell, you almost expect murder from those guys. Where's the shock? Where's the surprise? Where's the identification?

But when it's a middle class murderer, it all comes home. It really can be anyone: the gorcer, the neighbor, even the candlestick maker. When they get caught, you wonder. How many killers do you know that just haven't been caught yet? Ah, yes, the titilation that sells papers.

In this vein was William Henry Theodore Durrant (Theo for short). At 24, to all outward appearances, he was an ideal young man. He was a medical student, a member of the National Guard, and a pillar of his local Church, Emmanual Baptist. Not only was he the church librarian, but also the assisstant superintendant of the Sunday school and the secretary of the Young People's Society of the Christian Endeavor.

Yet, in 1895, this "ideal" young Christian man committed the murders that became known as "The Crime of the Century".

It started on April 3 with 21-year old Blanche Lamont. Blanche was a steady, serious minded girl who'd moved to San Francisco several months earlier to study for a teaching credential. Her social life was mainly limited to her church & its youth groups (Emmanual Baptist, of course), and she seldom associated with young men. So, when she didn't come home from school that day, her aunt was very alarmed. After a miserable night, she reported Blanche missing to the police.

The police weren't overly excited. Then, as now, young people tended to disappear to places no more sinister than Reno wedding chapels. They did mount an investigation, questioning Blanches friends & associates, primarily students & fellow members of Christian Endeavor. A few girls had seen Blanche boarding a streetcar in the company of a young man shortly after school. One Theo Durrant, who had seen her on the streetcar that morning, was theorizing (not to the police!) that she had been abducted by white slavers (not that unlikely in 1895 San Francisco). However, the police did check the bawdy houses anyway, and there, as everywhere, they drew a blank.

By the following Wednesday, April 10th, everyone was convinced that something really terrible had happened to Blanche. Her sister ran an ad in the paper -- "Blanche, no matter what has ha happened, please come home -- Maude". This ad even started to draw a little newspaper interest, although in a well-buried-in-the-front-section way.

But, that Saturday, the case was ready for the front page.

It started that morning. Blanche's aunt received an anonymous package in the mail, containing the rings Blanche had been wearing when she disappeared. Scribbled in the margins of the wrapping paper were the names of her music teacher and the Emmanual Baptist Church organist. Of course, these names were obviously a red herring -- police rapidly cleared both man of any involvement -- but it did show that whoever was behind Blanche's disappearance was either stupid, crazy, or both.

The real action that Saturday, however, was in the afternoon at old Emmanual Baptist itself. Like most churches, EB had hordes of middle-aged lady volunteers. The project that Saturday was to decorate the church for the morning's Easter service. Unfortunately, the ladies received a rather nasty shock & never quite finished with the decorations when they went into the library.

The walls of the library were well-splattered with blood, and in the alcove off the library was the corpse of a nude girl. Her clothes had been torn from her body, and a few strips of her dress used to strangle her. As if just to be safe, her murderer had also slashed & stabber her with several kitchen knives, breaking one of them into three pieces in the process.

And the biggest surprise of all? The body was <u>not</u> Blanche Lamont!

The corpse was 21-year old Minnie Williams, an Alameda servant girl, who, not surprisingly, was a member of E.B. and Christian Endeavor. She had left Alameda the previous night

EMMANUEL BAPTIST CHURCH

Note that the steeple was really a dummy not actually containing any bells.

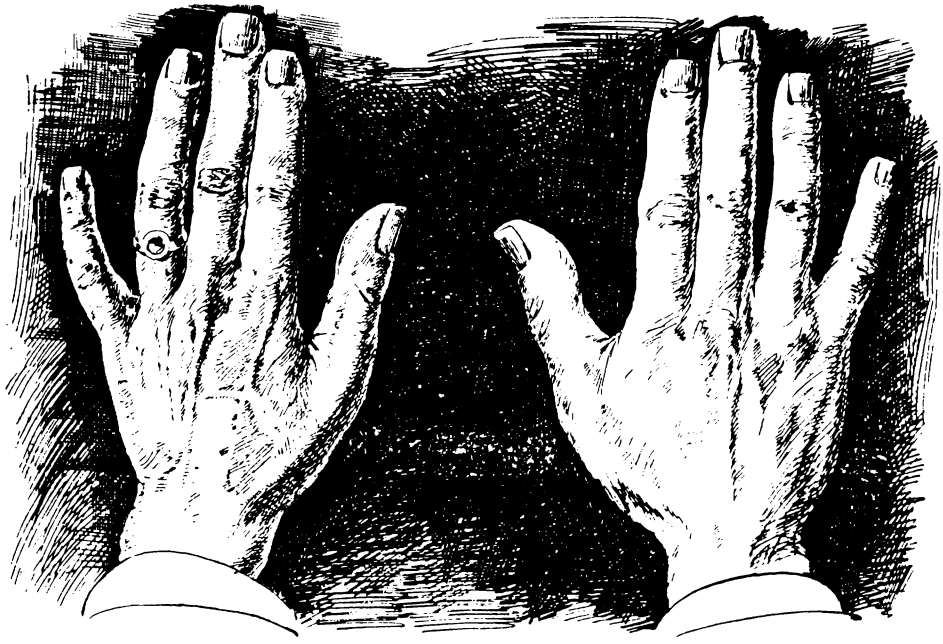
to attend a meeting of Christian Endeavor, but never made it.

The police immediatly sent out a call to bring Theo Durrant in for questioning. Not only did he belong to the same church & same youth group as both girls, but he'd dated each briefly, and had Minnie's purse in his room when the police searched it. While the police were tracking him down (he was out in the wilds of the East Bay on maneuvers that weekend), they made another discovery on Easter Sunday (services cancelled, of course). Up in the bell-less, unused church belfrey, was the nude body of Blanche Lamont. She had been laid out with her hands crossed on her breasts and her head propped up by wooden blocks in the manner traditionally used by morgue attendants--and medical students.

The news travelled through San Francisco like wildfire. By the time the police brought Theo back from the wilds of Walnut Creek, a crowd had gathered at the Ferry Building, waiting for him & chanting "Lynch him". The police had to sneak him into jail through the back streets.

Over the next few weeks, San Francisco boiled with the most incredible rumours about the "All-American boy". A week earlier, no one would have suspected him of shoplifting. Now people were believing anything, the more perverse, the better. The papers called him "That vile fiend" and "a monster incarnate" & demanded the death penalty. They published every rumour, true or not. Ah, the beauty of yellow journalism!

A favorite story, repeated over & over which survives to the present day, claimed that Theo used to lure young ladies into the Emmanual Baptist library, excuse himself for a moment, & return STARK NAKED! Fortunately, all the young ladies managed to escape with their virtue intact, and managed to avoid the most diligent efforts by the prosecution to track them down. Others claimed he was well known among the brothels of the Barbary Coast as the young man who "at a certain point" would decapitate a rooster. As a medical student, rumours naturally cir-



Pre-Trial caption: "The hands of Theo Durrant which Stabbed Minnie Williams & strangled Blanche Lamont

culated about just what he did with those cadavers -- and it wasn't in his dissection manual. He was even accused of performing unspeakable acts at church picnics! One author later claimed that he had "a photograph of Durrant at a picnic when he was only 16 years of age, and the position in which he posed proves conclusively that he was a degenerate even as a child". Left unsaid is why the Emmanual Baptist elders let him continue working in the library & the Sunday school in spite of being such an obvious pervert.

As for the crimes themselves, this is what probably happened.

On April 3rd, Theo cut class to pick up Blanche from her class at the normal school. They rode the streetcar out to the church & went inside. There, probably in the library, Theo strangled, and possibly raped her. Then, for God knows what reason, he dragged her up to the belfry, laid her out, & hid her clothes. On his way downstairs, he ran into the church organist who noticed that Theo was pale. He claimed he had been fixing the gas lamps & had inhaled a little too much gas. Hah.

On the 12th, Theo met Minnie at the ferry terminal, & rode out with her to the church. After luring her into the library, Minnie had sex with him -- probably willingly, for all the good it did her. Afterwards, instead of the standard cigarette, Theo strangled & slashed her, & possibly indulged in some med-school necrophilia. A few hours later, Theo was at the Christian Endeavor Meeting -- a little pale, but otherwise no worse for wear.

The jury selection for his trial didn't begin until the end of July, and ran through late August. The lawyers had to go through 1400 prospects to find 12 jurors who had somehow missed the paper's daily howl for Theo's neck. For some reason, Theo was only tried for Blanche's murder, though the prosecution

intended to introduce Minnie as corroborative evidence.

The trial finally started in early September, and from the start, it was plain Theo's goose was cooked. The prosecution had woven an incredible net of circumstantial evidence around him. Seems that half of San Francisco had seen Theo pick Blanche up, ride with her, get off, and go into the church. His defense consisted primarily of his lawyers arguing & niggling over ever point, no matter how small. This stretched the trial into 7 weeks.

Theo did take the stand in his own defense, although its hard to see why. He still claimed that the last he'd seen of Blanche was on the streetcar that fateful morning. He'd been at a lecture at the med school when he supposedly picked her up. As for meeting Minnie, that hadn't been planned. A mysterious stranger on the street had accosted him & told that if he waited at the ferry building, he'd find out something about Blanche's disappearance. Right. With a story like that, who could blame the jury for finding him guilty on the first ballot?

He spent the next 3 years on Death Row in San Quentin waiting out the inevitable appeals. Eventually, Theo & his lawyers were reduced to pleading for mercy on the grounds that Executing him would bum out Mamma Durrant. This cut no ice with the governor, so, on January 7, 1898, the sentence was carried out.

Durrant was suprisingly blase about the whole thing. That morning, he ate a good, hearty breakfast, & even bitched about his death outfit to the guards. On the scaffold, he made a calm, rational speech proclaiming his innocence, but still forgiving all those reporters, prosecutors, etc. who had persecuted him. Then, a drop of 5' 8" ended it all.

After they cut his body down, Ma & Pa Durrant did the usual whining & wailing. Everyone then headed inside to a room where Theo's body was laid out. Ma & Pa proceeded to ask for, and down, a hearty breakfast, not 10 feet away from their son's cooling body. "Papa, I'll have some more of that roast" Ma said at one point.

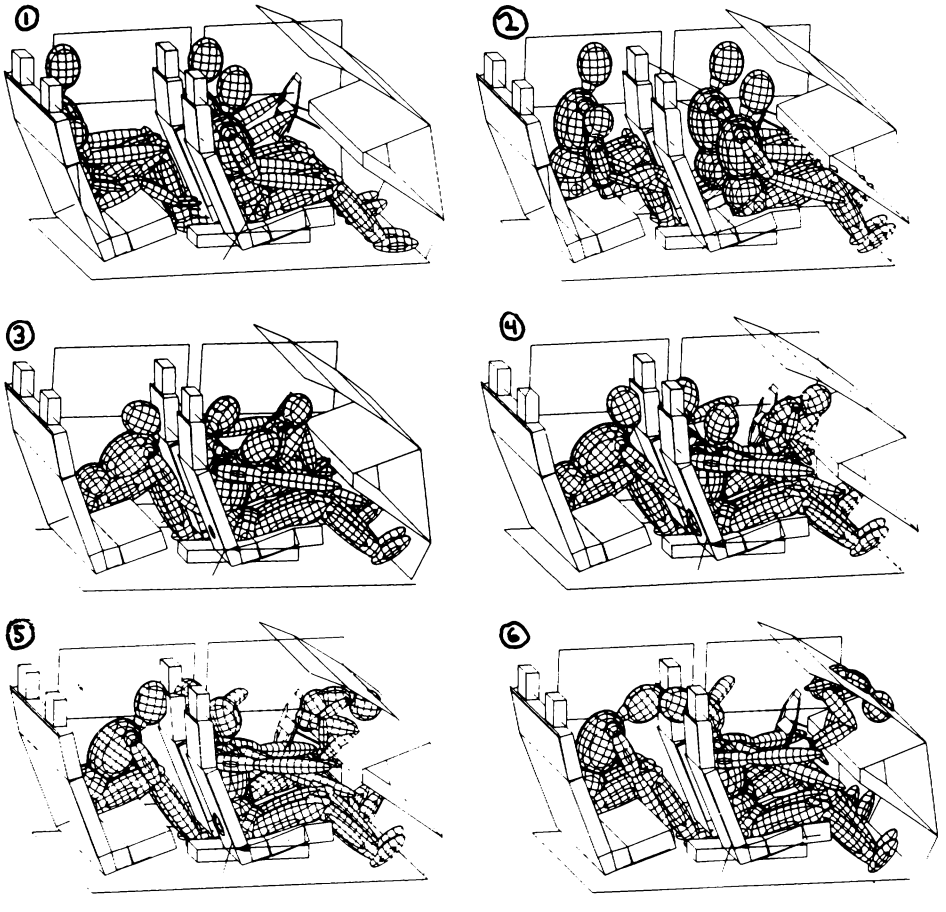
Probably because they feared crime fans turned grave robbers, the Durrants chose to cremate Theo. There, they ran into a minor problem. No funeral home in San Francisco, or Northern California for that matter, wanted any part of Theo. After contacting virtually every mortuary in the state, the Durrants finally located one in Pasedena. Even there, a crowd of about 100 gathered early in the morning just to catch a glimpse of the coffin that held the Criminal of the Century.

So that's what he did. As for why, well, that's anyone's guess. Chances are that Theo was a bit of a psychopath. His overall calmness during the whole process & the audacious stories he all told on the stand point to a "I know right from wrong, but I don't give a fuck" attitude. Fortunately for the female population of San Francisco, this careless attitude extended to the disposal of the bodies. I mean, sticking 'em in the belfrey?

Like any great crime, the Durrant case generated its fair share of myth & legend. During the trial, there was a woman whom the papers called "The Sweet Pea Girl" who presented Theo with flowers everyday. She was supposed to be some sort of dramatic witness or the girl Theo was shielding or something like that. Perry Mason stuff. She turned out to be a "Poor, limp, tear-stained hysterical perverted little simpleton" housewife who late wound up working in a Sutter Street whorehouse. So much for legends.

And the legends have lasted to the present day. There are the stories confirming that he did do it, that he had a long history of unspecified immoral acts, that he'd confessed to a priest in San Quentin, etc. But just as persistant are the rumours that he didn't do it -- it was the preacher, it was the janitor, it was the inevitable conveniant hobo. Seemingly dozens of people confessed to the murders on their deathbed, none of whom had been near SF in 1895.

But the lynch mob atmosphere left almost as quickly as it came. Emmanual Baptist survived the storm quite nicely, although it was torn down in 1915 to make room for flats. (No sense of history !). And, in 1910, Theo's sister, Maud, made a triumphant return to the city. She'd left for Europe shortly before the murders to study music, & was now internationally known under the name "Maud Allan" for her "Visions of Salome" dance. She made no bones about who she really was, and, instead of being banned, danced to sold-out houses. Thus ended "The Crime of the Century".



Imbeciles, Morons, & Kallikaks

IDIOT
I.Q.: 0 - 20

He dallied with a feeble-minded tavern girl
He married a worthy Quakeress
She bore a son known as "Old Horror" who had ten children
She bore seven upright worthy children
From "Old Horror's" ten children came hundreds of the lowest types of human beings
From these seven worthy children came hundreds of the highest types of human beings

IMBECILE
I.Q.: 20 - 50

MORON
I.Q.: 50 - 70

In 1776, one Martin Kallikak* of New Jersey enlisted in the Continental Army. During an off-duty escapade in a tavern, he met -- and impregnated -- a "nameless feeble-minded girl". No matter to him; at the end of his enlistment, he returned home to marry a Quaker girl of good family. Their descendants made the Kallikak name widely respected in that part of the state. They were businessmen, landowners, & professionals. Through marriage, they became related to some of the best, most socially prominent families in the state -- families descended from founders of universities, signers of the Declaration of Independence, etc. Six generations of this line produced almost nothing but solid, upright citizens -- the pillars of their communities.

Meanwhile, a totally different breed of Kallikaks were becoming infamous. The nameless feeble-minded girl named her bastard Martin Kallikak, Jr., & he, in turn , sired a completely different line of Kallikaks -- one that included a startling array of mental defectives, alcoholics, epileptics, and "sexually immoral persons". Locally, he was remembered as "The Old Horror", known for appearing every election day "in somebody's cast-off clothing, ready to vote, for the price of a drink, the donor's ticket". He was a moron (see classification). Even though he married a normal woman in 1803, 5 of their 8 surviving children were also feeble-minded. In all, of 480 known descendants of MK, Jr., 36 were illegitimate, 33 sexually immoral (prostitutes), 24 alcoholics, 3 epileptic, 3 criminal, and no less than 143 definitely feeble-minded.

* -- a fictitous name coined from the Greek words kallos (beauty) and kakos (bad). Must protect the innocent along with the guilty, y'know.

Selections From The Kallikak Family Tree & Album

Children of Guss Saunders, with their Grandmother.

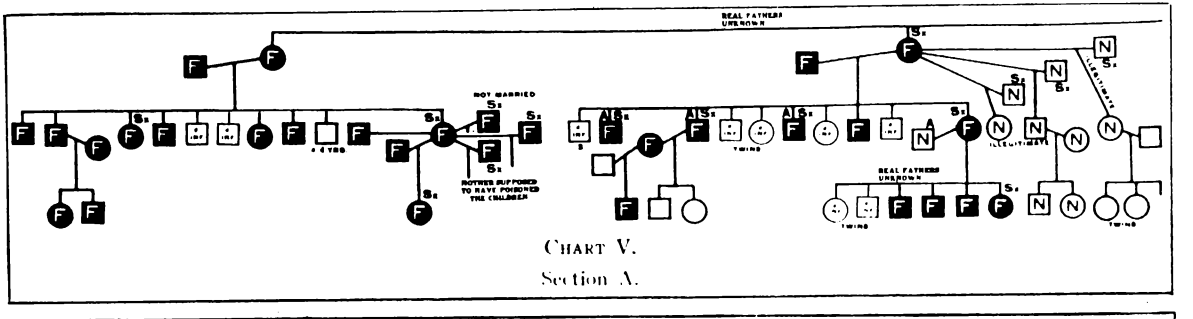
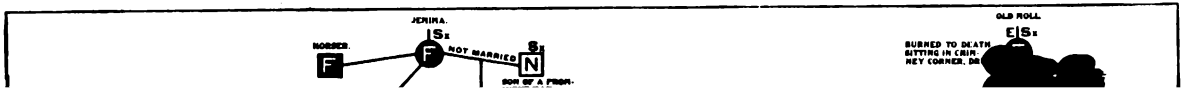


Chart V.

Section A.



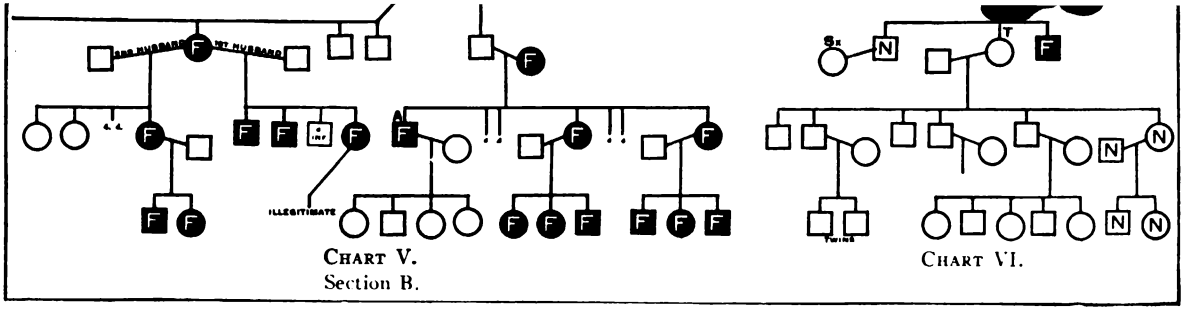


CHART V.
Section B.

CHART VI.

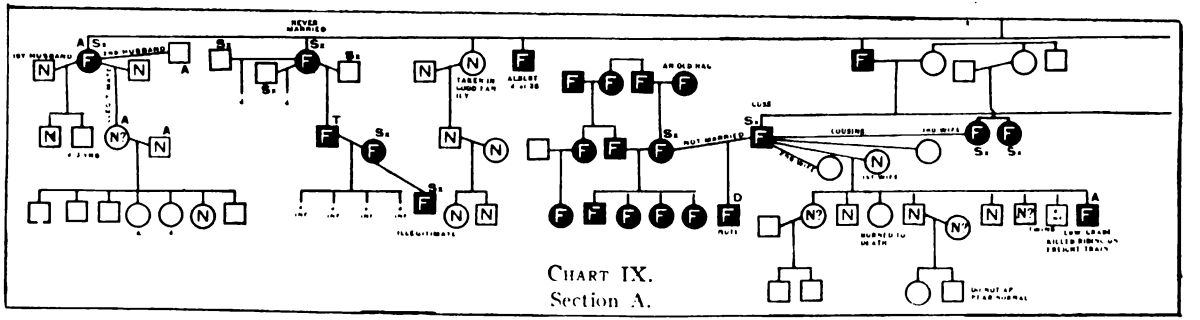


CHART IX.
Section A.

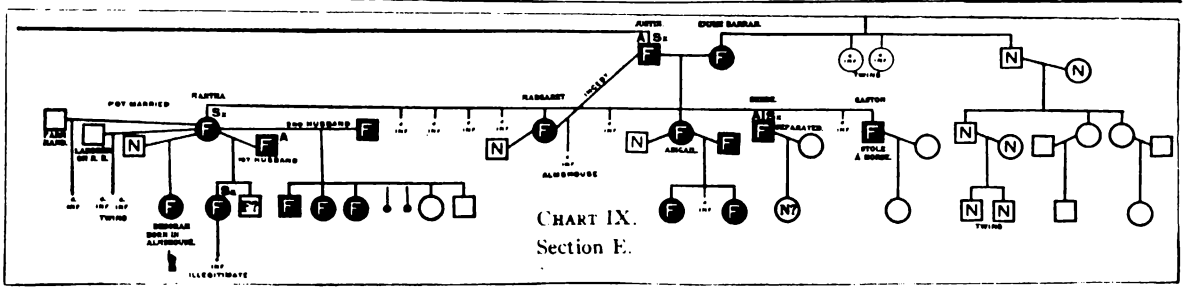


CHART IX.
Section E.

N = Normal. F = Feeble-minded. Sx = Sexually immoral. A = Alcoholic. I = Insane. Sy = Syphilitic. C = Criminalistic. D = **Deaf.**
d. inf. = died in infancy. T = Tuberculous. Hand points to child in Vineland Institution. For further explanation see pp. 33–35.

The story of these 2 different branches was discovered in the early 1900s by Dr. Henry Goddard, the Director of Research at the Training School for Backward & Feeble-Minded Children at Vineland, New Jersey. One of the inmates was Deborah Kallikak, the great-great-great granddaughter of "The Old Horror". Goddard considered her "a typical illustration of a high-grade moron ... the kind of girl that fills our reformatories". In tracing back her ancestory to study the heritability of feeble-mindedness, Goddard's fieldworkers continually ran across a seemingly unrelated, line of Kallikaks -- the "good" side, or the legitimate descendants of Martin, Sr. When the relationship between the two branches became known, Goddard thought he had a natural experiment on his hands: a family of "good" English stock with a branch suddenly tainted with feeble-mindedness. Since both families remained in the same area ("one of the best districts in the state"), environment would have no effect. The only difference between the two families would be the quality of their genes.

In researching the "bad" side of the family, the fieldworkers uncovered appalling conditions.-- real white trash, New Jersey style. They lived in filthy, tumble-down mountain shacks or vermin-infested city tenements. They changed mates & produced illegitimate offspring at a shocking pace. If they didn't die in infancy (as was quite likely), their children were unwashed, ill-fed, and uneducated. On entering one house, the fieldworker "gazed aghast at what appeared to be a procession of imbeciles". Wherever the family lived, it was "notorious for the number of devectives & delinquents it had produced". Goddard himself concluded, "The surprise & horror of it all was that no matter where we traced them, whether in the prosperous rural district, in the city slums to which some had drifted, or in the more remote mountain regions, or whether it was a question of the 2nd or 6th generation, an apalling amount of defectiveness was everywhere found".

Goddard classed them as "high-grade morons". They look ok, their teachers say they're ok, but "such hopes are delusions". The study conclusively demonstrates that these people are helpless victims of their genes, condemned to a life of sub-normality. "They were feeble-minded, and no amount of education or good environment can change a feeble-minded individual into a normal one, any more that it can change a red-haired stock into a black-haired one".

According to Goddard, most criminals, as well as alcoholics, paupers, and prostitutes, are morons. If they lack relatives to care for them, they invariably become burdens on society. The sluggish ones "simply lie down & starve to death if someone does not help them". The nervous & excitable ones turn to crime. The solution? Institutionalization. Safely segregated, they no longer will be "social sores" & would be prevented from prepetuating the bad strain. "The laws of this country will not permit children 10 years old to marry. Why should they permit it when the mentality is only 10?"

Of course, Goddard is wrong, make that EXTREMELY wrong. When THE KALLIKAK FAMILY was first published in 1912, it was widely accepted by both psychologists & the general public, and was very popular. He even received feelers from Broadway about dramatization rights! However, since then, the whole study has been thoroughly blasted.

Just on the surface, it all looks really suspect. Goddard demonstrates an amazing ability at tracing lines of descent back over 100 years in a family noted for "sexual immorality". As Harry Edwards once said, given the rather high lev-

el of extra-marital sex throughout human history, "it's a wise man who knows who his grandfather really is". Then, there's his method of "diagnosing" feeblemindedness of people he never met. (In fact, Deborah was probably the only Kallikak he met face-to-face personally). All the work of tracing the family trees & DETERMINING FEEBLEMINDEDNESS (!) was done by FIELD WORKERS! He claimed that "after some experience, the field-worker becomes expert in inferring the condition of those persons no seen from the similarity of language used in describing them to that used about person whom she has seen". Thus were the feebleminded spotted, 100 years after their deaths by totally unqualified, inexpert people.

And, his claim that both sides of the Kallikaks lived in the same environment is a joke. Sure, they lived in the same county, but there's a world of difference in environment between the county squire's estate & the dirt-farmer's hovel. Just the difference in nutrition & pre-natal care would account for any excess of mentally retarded farm kids, to say nothing of the white trash lifestyle. (Who ever heard of a IQ test slanted towards them?). Goddard is even contradicted by his own junky data! One feeble-minded Kallikak couple had 5 children, whom, by Goddard's own "Mendelian expectation" should have all been feeble-minded. However, one was adopted by a "wealthy" family & turned out to be quite normal. Whoops!

The most glaring example of making the facts fit the theory is the photos of the "bad Kallikaks" that Goddard reproduces. With the exception of the photos of Deborah, they all have been crudely retouched (which may or may not show up on this xerox...). Someone has darkened in the eyes & mouths of the Kallikaks giving them a dull, half-witted, & sinister look -- sort of like vicious morons!

More of the skullduggery behind the study was dug out by J. David Smith in MINDS MADE FEEBLE: THE MYTH & LEGACY OF THE KALLIKAKS. Digging around in Goddard's papers, he discovered that Goddard relied almost completely on one field worker, Elizabeth Kite. The entire study was completed in less than 2 years, & was based almost entirely on Kite's "research", which consisted of conversations with old people with bad memories. She never even discovered the name of the "nameless feeble-minded girl" who started the line. The only thing known about her was that "she wasn't all there", so obviously she was mentally retarded.

Even Deborah Kallikak may not have been retarded. Smith, as psychologist, thinks that more likely she was learning disabled. She always functioned very well in the institution, was excellant at woodshop, sewed her own clothes, played in the band. It was only when it came to letters & numbers that she had problems. No matter. She died in the Vineland State School in 1978, after spending 81 of her 89 years in institutions.

Also, in book, Smith admits to knowing who the Kallikaks really are. Although he doesn't reveal their real name, there are enough clues for the determined trash buff. They lived in rural Hunterdon & Somerset counties, Martin, Sr. enlisted in April 1776 (2nd Hunterdon County Regiment, to be exact), and his first son born April 22, 1779.

So dear reader, does the "bad blood" of "The Old Horror" himself flow in your veins? Are you a mental defective who doesn't even realize it?

AL HOFF,
Girl Reporter

The Time: Noon, March 1987 (Post Bakker Scandal)
The Place: The Washington (D.C.) Sheraton
The Event: The Reverend Ernest Angley Luncheon and Miracle Healing Service.

Two thousand voices chattered pleasantly around the convention room. Twelve to a table, strangers all, but bound together in sin and sickness; sin, sickness, and the desire for redemption. The mode of dress was extravagant -- your best churchin' hat. Amidst the chatter hung an air of anticipation -- soon the Rev. Ernest Angley would appear; soon the chicken lunch would manifest itself.

The lunch arrived first. Generous helpings. I was hungry, so I tucked right in. Too late I realized no one else was eating. Certainly not! Grace had not been said. A major faux pas. And I had so hoped to blend in.

When I learned about the luncheon/healing service, I immediately set about to procure tickets -- one for me, one for a brave date. A lengthy session of phone calls with a woman who lived too close to the jail and suggested that I make my check payable to her, initiated my quest, but I knew better. I wrote the Good Reverend's name on MY check. The tickets arrived. They carefully stated that "...due to the size of the hall, stretchers could not be accommodated." Stretchers? Boy, this looked promising!. At least it implied that there would be miracles of the ambulatory.

As lunch was being eaten, Rev. Angley appeared. Those unfamiliar with his work are informed at this time that Ernest Angley is one of two faith healers currently on television. Point of divinity -- Akron, Ohio. This man can heal through your television set. "Now friends... PLACE your HANDS on the television screen and PRAY with me." And here he was now, alive and in person!

The man moved among us, as if mortal, personally shaking every individual's hand. I was impressed. There was a lot of sweaty flesh to be pressed. As he approached my table, I even quivered. I graciously shook his hand. It would have been rude not to. The woman next to me, in her vest velour, gave the Good Reverend a gaping West Virginia smile, and assured him he looked much better in person! The Reverend blanched visibly. I noticed that his rug sure was a lot more noticeable in person.

The lunch proceeded without incident or alcohol. All the java you could pour down your thirsty throat. I had trouble finishing my All-American Apple Pie (with REAL cream). I was saved from deliberating its fate when the Good Reverend stood up to speak.

The major points of his talk were as follows: 1) He only took a small salary, and had no need to live in a mansion. Not on this earth. The Lord was building one for him in heaven. 2) The money we sent would go only to his ministry. (This got the Jim and Tammy dig out of the way). 3) His

ministry was doing great work in Africa. 4) In Africa he had watched babies, "just lit-tle bay-bees", starve to death. (This was quite eloquently described, and I guiltily finished my pie.) 5) Could we all pledge to send just a dollar a day to his Jesus For All Nations Ministry? Naturally, everyone raised their hands. I studied my pie plate intently. I didn't thing it would be nice to lie to a man of the cloth.

A donation envelope was passed. I filled out my address so I could be on the mailing list forever. The Reverend assured us, as soon as the money was collected, a healing line could be formed. A healing line?! A big strong line now. You're looking good. Implicit strategy, the Reverend saving the theatrics for last.

True to his word, some of the front tables were cleared back and sinners diligently plodded up and formed a long horizontal line. Many clutched their Bibles. The Reverend started at one end, moving with great rapidity, slapped the palm of his hand against the sinners' brows and cried "A-Heal!" I stood fascinated. Sixty ravaged sinners saved in sixty glorious seconds.

But occasionally he would stop, and single a backslider out. "Are you a Christian?" The fervent nod. "What can Jesus cure you of?" A lot of back and heart trouble. Much muttering on the part of the Reverend, the slap of the hand, and Whammo! the sinner fell backwards in a dead faint!. Fortunately, the Reverend's goon squad were moving just as rapidly behind the sinners to catch them when they fell, hats, Bibles, and all. A towel was placed over the feet of those thus stricken.

I stood on my chair to watch. These people lying on the floor were not moving. They appeared to be out cold. A few were moaning. One woman was shouting "Jesus! Jesus! Jesus!" But the miracles were non-stop. One elderly woman began jiggling, shaking and SPEAKING IN TONGUES! I got up on my tiptoes. Still the sinners trooped up, and still the miracles continued. A man in a wheelchair walked. Amen! Amen! A woman threw down her crutches. Praise Jesus! A smoker ground his cigarettes beneath his hell, cured of the addiction. ("Tobacco! Get it out! Get it out and underfoot!") People still lay on the floor, motionless, with that enigmatic cloth thrown over their feet.

The toothless velour creature nest to me prodded. "You're goin' up? C'mon." I was trapped. I was incognito. To refuse the healing powers of Jesus was sure as hellfire gonna stand out with this lot. Up we went. Both of us being women first, we took our purses.

Soon, I was moving into the line, stepping over prostrate bodies, still slain in the spirit. My palms were sweaty. What if my cigarettes got taken away? Almost a full pack. Velour nudged me. "I hope my wig don't fly off when Ernest hits me." I contemplated this in horror. Ernest got closer. The lady next to me moaned and fell over. Then, me. A palm struck me quite forcefully in the forehead and I had the distinct sensation of the two goons behind me simultaneously grabbing my arms and pulling me backwards. So, that mystery was solved. I resisted. They moved on, and I remained standing. My cigarettes were safe. I had beaten the Holy Spirit. Velour hadn't fallen over either. She looked as unimpressed as I. We shrugged and returned to our seats.

There were no more major miracles. At 4 PM, we received a final blessing and a reminder about that dollar a day. We were dismissed. I filed out with all the chattering hats. I quickly made my way outside. I needed a cigarette bad. Thank God, I hadn't been cured.

BIG Books

Gaute, J. H. H. & Odell, R. THE MURDERER'S WHO'S WHO (Methuen, 1979 269pp.)
( ) MURDER 'WHAT DUNIT' (Pan, 1982 462 pp.)
Nash, J.R. BLOODLETTERS & BADMEN (Evans, 1973 640pp.)
Sifakis, C. THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN CRIME (Facts on File, 1982 802pp.)
Wilson, C. & Pitman, P. ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MURDER (Putnam, 1962 558 pp)
( ) & Seaman, D. THE ENCYCLOPEDIA OF MODERN MURDER 1962 - 1982 (Putnam, 1985 274pp.)

One of the hard parts of being a crime buff is keeping all the great ones straight. From Cain to Costello to Czlogosz, mankind has raised the criminal crafts to a true art form, something your WORLD BOOK ENCYCLOPEDIA has yet to realize. Say you've let your Manson get rusty, or you never could figure out exactly who Hall & Mills — where do you turn?

To one of the above books, of course. These "crime encyclopedias" are an absolute necessity for any serious crime fan. Each one is arranged A to Z, just like any decent reference, but it's all about crime — every great moment in the history of murder & mayhem at your fingertips. Just think of the hours you'll save leafing through your collection, trying to figure out just who John George Haigh* was. No crime library is complete without at least one.

The question is, which one? Ideally, there would be one clear cut choice, withh all the answers about all the crimes. Unfortunately, it ain't so. Not only does each book have its own self-imposed limitations — Sifakis & Nash stick strictly to the American school, & Wilson solely to murder — but there are some pretty drastic differences in quality & completeness as well. Let the buyer beware.

* — England's "Acid Bath Murderer", who killed a widow & disposed of the body in a vat of sulfuric acid, but was caught because it didn't work on her dentures. He then tried to feign insanity by claiming he'd drank her blood. No dice.

	Gaute	Nash	Sifakis	Wilson
Arbuckle	0	0	2	0
Mary Bell	8	0	0	9
R. Christie	8	0	0	9
Dean Corll	7	0	6	7
Dillinger	0	4	6	0
Durrant	5	2	5	0
Ed Gein	6	8	7	0
Gillette	6	8	7	3
Kürten	5	0	0	8
Whitman	7	8	7	7
	52	30	40	43

As a tenative me asure, I selected (rather unscientifically) 10 favorite crimminal figures: Fatty Arbuckle (see MCBF#5), Mary Bell (11-yr old Brit murderess), J. Reginald Christie (Brit whore-killer of 10 Rillington Place fame), Dean Croll (prolific Houstan boy-killer), John Dillinger, Theo Durrant, Ed Gein, Chester Gillette (the AMERICAN TRAGEDY murder),&Peter Kürten (the Monster of Düsseldorf). For each book, I rated the entry (if any!) on a very subjective 1 to 10 scale. Pluses were accuracy, style, & completeness; minuses were incorrectness, ommissions, and lame speculations (especially of the revisionist kind). See the nice table for the results.

Of course, the numbers don't really tell the whole story. So, let's take it from the bottom.

Unfortunately, Nash's BLOODLETTERS & BADMEN is the most readily available crime cyclopedia. But if you are aware of & accept its limitations, it's moderately usefull. First, Nash sticks strictly to the American stuff — no namby pamby Brits allowed, and only people who were convicted of their crimes beyond a shadow of a doubt — hence no Lizzie Borden or Hall-Mills. Working within this narrow framework, he is fairly complete in his roll call of murderers, bank robbers, con men, outlaws, & gangsters. He dredges up a few deserving of more attention, & reprints hundreds of phtos. He even includes a bibliography, which unfortunately is made almost useless by the fact that it isn't referenced by the entries. But the minuses are many, mainly his fast & loose attitude towards "the facts". This book should be taken with a grain of salt — a lot of what he presents as "facts" are just rumours, if that. And then, he really loves revisionist criminal history. No matter how wild & far out the popular legend is, Nash swallows & loudly trumpets it as fact (especially if it's about John Dillinger — Nash is the leader of the Dillinger-survived-the-FBI-shootout crowd). It's still fun reading, though.

Next up from the bottom is Carl Sifakis's ENCYCLOPEDIA OF AMERICAN CRIME. Obviously, no Europeans here, either, but Sifakis looks more at the entire history of crime, including the maybe- & probably not guilty, as well as entries on types of crimes, famou s crime-fighters, great riots, and crime statistics. Perhaps be-

cause of this, his biographical entries aren't as many or as detailed as Nash's. He alsoisn't that hardnosed about facts vs. fancy, though he does thankfully refrain from drackpot theorising (even to the point of chiding "unnamed" revisionists at times!). Although his book isn't as usefull as Nash's for serious buffs, because of the extra material, it is great for beginners (was my first, in fact). Also profusely illustrated, unfortunately sans any bibliography.

Colin Wilson's pair are, quite obviously, confined to murder, but this time, the Europeans get in their share, and maybe more. Some of the English cases he covers would have trouble making the 2nd section over here. This makes for lots of slow reading for the casual skimmer. However, what is covered, is covered reasonably well & accurately, even if it hasn't been solved. The only real shortcoming of the entries is a slight excess of psychological "insight" & speculation, and the almost complete lack of pictures. The bibliographies are extremely sketchy, and once again, no referenced by the text. But by far the most annoying part of the book is Wilson's horrid introductions where he babbles incoherently about the inter-connection between murder, literature, & philosophy. At least it is easily avoided.

Unfortunately, the winner, Gaute & Odell's THE MURDERER'S WHO'S WHO is also by far the most difficult to find. Expect to pay big $$ (well, moderately big $$) for this one. As such, I only recommend it to the serious. Entry-wise, it is near complete, covering all the big & almost big names in US & European murder, even if never solved. The articles tend to be short, but concise & extremely accurate, and beautifully illustrated with some incredibly sick photos. (Evidentally, G & O are true buffs lacking any sort of restraint of taste. Corpses, blood, autopsy reports — yow!!). The best part, however, is the bibliography — referenced to each individual entry, so you can find out exactly where they got it all. Companion volume MURDER WHATDUNIT is about the technique of murder. Entries cover the causes, method, and detection of it — sort of a nice layman's introduction to forensic science, & once again, definitely not for the squeamish. Examples used are all from famous and/or classic cases. The only real problem with these two books is that they're not 2 or 3 times as long.

My final recommendation? Well, I say, do what I did — buy 'em all, or at least as many as you can find & afford. Gaute & Odell are great on murder — but what about the joys of con man, gangsters, & such. Nash has it all on American crime (even if he's wrong about half of it) — but what about the Europeans? Sifakis is great fun & truly informative, but far from encyclopedic. The ultimate crime book, combining all the great murderers, outlaws, gangsters, & conmen from both the Old World & the New, has yet to be written.

Maybe I will, someday. But don't hold your breath.

Beyond Art...

"The Evening of Eccentric Performances" -- McKenna Theatre, San Francisco State University, 6/8/88

Every year, the SF State Theatre Department puts on "The SF New Vaudeville Festival" to give the masses a little culture and the students a bit of real-life production experience. Usually, it seems slanted towards "Performance Art" and other forms of government- and academia- subsidized indulgence. However, "TEoEP" was something else. The performers went beyond,or maybe just below, mere eccentricity, art, or vaudeville. It was a modern sideshow.

Opener WAYNE DOBA was billed as a physical comic", which thankfully meant he had nothing in common with the make-them-yups-laugh standup types. He was actually funny, being dragged into, and around, the theatre by his "invisible dog". At one point, he had the entire crowd "na-na-na-nananana"ing while he tapped the rhythm to "Wipeout". And this was not a crowd given to sing-alongs.

Following was MOZ WRIGHT, a semi-hippie who combines fire-eating and sword-swallowing into one act. He did a few fancy fire moves -- blowing fireballs, lighting his fingers -- and a fairly standard sword routine. You have no idea how nerve-racking it is to watch the swords, though. Every time he shoved one down the ol' gullet, the crowd was so quiet you could hear it go down! Such is the impact on us poor disadvantaged urban folk, living off the path of the big carnivals.

Next was PAT HOWARD, who did a brief dance routine with a few contortions thrown in. Dull. She must write really good grant proposals.

Then came the most offbeat act of the evening, THE REVEREND CHUMLEY. He opened with some decent, rapid-fire leftist standup comedy. OK, it was funny. We laughed. He started waving machetes around, and demonstrated their sharpness by slicing up cabbage-heads christened "George Bush" and "Oliver North". We laughed some more. He put the machetes on a rack, sharp side up, forming a rather dangerous-looking stepladder. The people who knew what was up stopped laughing. He then climbed this "ladder of machetes" barefoot. The crowd was dead silent. You could have heard a pin drop -- or, if he'd slipped, a few toes drop. A bizarre change of pace.

After insipidly poignant mime (is that redundant?) DERIQUE MCGEE came the real star of the show -- STEVIE STARR, the regurgitator. Honest. His act consists of swallowing, and regurgitating an amazing variety of small objects: coins, rings, golf balls, and even a live (surviving the ordeal) goldfish. Not surprisingly, he's probably the only person in the world still doing this act.

Outside of the idea itself, it isn't as disgusting as you'd expect. He brings everything back up without gagging -- more like a loud "Hick", and it comes back nice and clean throughout. But still -- it is a crass, crude, rude and disgusting spectacle, and Mr. Starr plays it to the hilt. He performs in a cheap purple polyester Las Vegas style jumpsuit and makes continual rude suggestions. During the obligatory humiliation of the female volunteer, he repeatedly threatened to force the poor girl to swallow one of his pet fish who had "just made toilet".

It's amazing what he could with a few well trained stomach muscles. Not only did he regurgitate everything quickly, cleanly, & efficiently, but he could sort through the mess in his stomach. After swallowing a dozen half-dollars, he asked the crowd how many they wanted back. Five? Fine. Singly or all at once? Batches of two & three please. Hick! -- two halves. Hick! -- three more. Seven Hicks! -- the remaining seven, one per hick. For a climax, he swallowed a small Rubik's cube and, after some contortions, brought it up with one of the sides rotated!

Unfortunately, the crowd had been forewarned, so no one screamed, fainted, got sick, or ran out during the performance. In spite of this, STEVIE STARR is not to be missed. If you have to, rationalize it. "Well, I'm really just interested in the performance limits of the human body". His act is weird, gross, off-beat, unusual, and above all, disgusting -- the basic ingredients of good, wholesome entertainment.

SPY

As much as I like the idea of magazines, there are very few that I'm actually willing to buy. Too much time spent fawning & gushing over celebrities who belong in frong of a firing squad — who needs it, at a $2.95 cover price? When I want to renew my disgust, there's always the library, or, in a pinch, the used magazine stores. Might even help put a few tweedy Hahvud English grads in the unemployment lines where they belong.

But then came SPY & my life changed. Not only did I buy, I subscribed, & every month (except for (sob!) January & July) I impatiently await its arrival. It's addicting. Do not let its sub-title "The New York Monthly" deceive you. You do not have to live in Manhattan to appreciate SPY, though I bet it helps. All you really need is to hate yuppies.

Seemingly, SPY hates anyone who makes more money than them, especially if in doing so they've made a big name for themselves. They live to drag the young & old rich down from their pedastals, exposing them as cranky, talentless, somewhat witless brownnosers. And it's done in an incredibly witty, intelligent, & snide manner. SPY doesn't need to resort to gossip or scandal-mongering. Their subjects are quite capable (& maybe only capable) of digging their own graves.

Each issue opens with "Naked City", a collection of odds & ends. "The Usual Suspects" updates the latest on favorite SPY whipping boys like George Bush, Bob Hope, and Donald Trump. "The Times" reports on "the usual cast of vile, bum-kissing, toadies" who now run the NEW YORK TIMES: Max Frankel, Arthur Gelb, and Abe "I'm writing as bad as I can" Rosenthal. (The last with able assisstance from his wife, "bosmy dirty-book writer" Shirley Lord). Regularily, this trio engages in back-scratching, influence peddling, and just plain bad writing. "Datebook" keeps NYers aware of important upcoming events, such as Ivan Boesky's first day in prison, or "The Backwards Mile ... the NY Road Runners Club is clearly desperate". "Separated At Birth" reprints pairs of celeb photos who may just be that — Tama Janowitz/Al (Grandpa Munster)

Lewis, Frank Zappa/Orville Wright, Donald Hodel/Steve Martin. And, as an extra public service, "Letters To The NEW YORKER" prints letters of comment to that non-existant 'Letters To The Editor' page complaining how dull the snooty rag has become.

When it comes to longer articles, SPY is on somewhat shakier ground. Quite often, they are only average, or even dull, like a lengthy piece on a suppressed Chappaquiddick book, or a saga on Greneda which might have been funny if I'd seen the proper Vietnam movies. (DEERHUNTER? APOCALYPSE NOW??). However, they do have their successes like "Los Angeles: City Without Shame" or "Little Men — How The Runts Have Taken Over". (Conclusion is that "They're not so short when you stand them on their money").

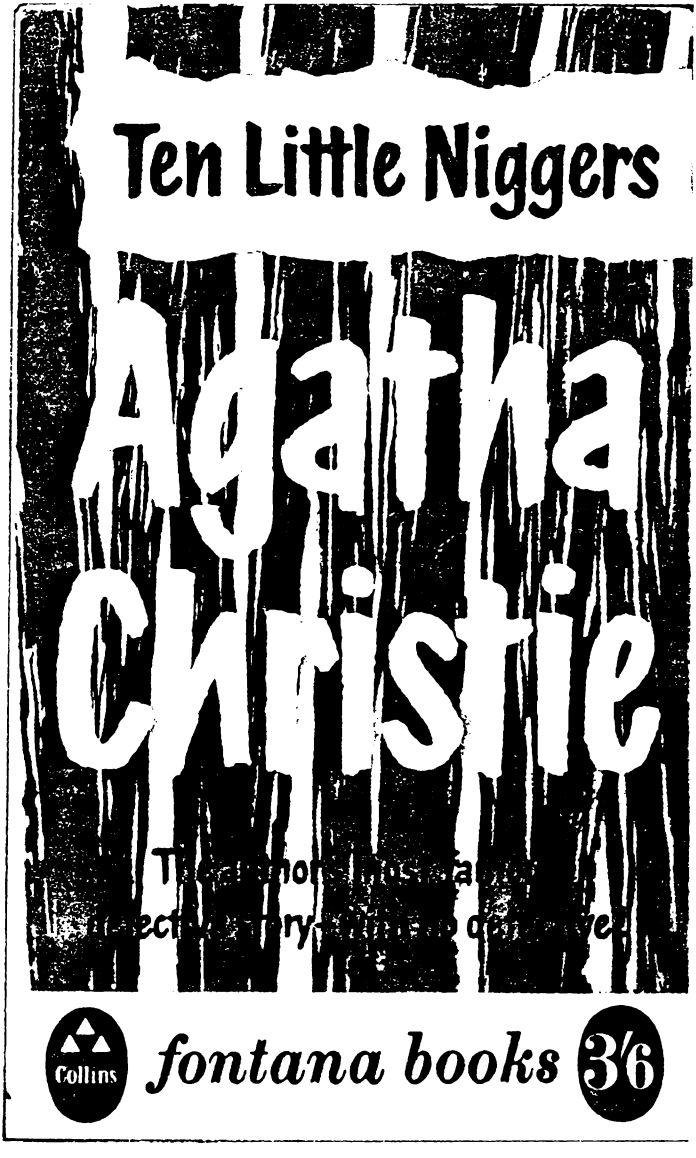
But all this is more than compens ated for by SPY's true area of genius: their slickly captioned post-modern graphics & s nappy, nasty tables. Prince is labeled as a "Vile, rodent-like entertainer, Henry Kissinger "socialite-war criminal", and Donald Trump alternately as a "Queens-born casino operator" or "a short fingered vulgarian". And in their tables, you can quickly compare, say, the merits of the various TV evangelists, the latest round of self-serving, "tell-all" celeb autobios, or merely the partying abilities of Carl Bernstein, Morgan Entrekin, and Anthony Haden-Guest. For example, Trump's ART OF THE DEAL is compared to artist Julian Schnabel's CVJ is such vital categories as average number of "I's" per page (which Trump won, by a narrow margin). SPY hits hardest with just a single line or two, or perhaps a brief quote from the victim.

Of course, SPY is written by journalists, and what are journalis ts without a little investigative reporting? But far from uncovering massive conspiracies (unless they involve nespotism), SPY prefers documenting various odd bits of urban weirdness and performing off-beat urban experiments. For example, one article on the NY Auxilary Police (which painted them as useless, uniform-loving nuts) included a SPY staffer's attempt (failed) at performing a citizen's arrest. Another sent a female staffer out on the streets in an inflatable bra — would people treat her differently? They called up the local suicide hotlines — one disconnected, others prepetually busy. They attended a MENSA cocktail party. They identified, once & for all, just who those people are on stamps these days. They surveyed the outer buroughs for the availability of such urban necessities as Vintage Contemporaries. They even visited the infamous Milton Halpern Forensic Museum, ordinarily only open to cops & med students, & incredibly sick. All feature articles should be like this.

And this is just scratching the surface of SPY. Other delights await — "Party Poop" (VIPs looking stupid & drunk in public), "Who's Newly Who & Who's No Longer Who", "Review of Reviewers", "The Industry", "Celestial Hindsight"... the list goes on — nasty, vicious, and above all, hysterically funny.

But the truly strange thing about S PY is the ads. Incredibly upscale to the point where the product being advertized isn't even identified. (It took me 2 months to figure out if JIMMY Z was a clothing line or a resturaunt). Do the readers who purchase these products realize that the gun is really pointed at them??

Paperback Gallery



An early British edition of an Agatha Christie book later reprinted (especially in the U.S.) as AND THEN THERE WERE NONE and TEN LITTLE INDIANS

READ HARD OR DIE

SEASONS OF SHAME by Robert C. Yeager (McGraw, 1979)
non-fiction
A must for any true sports hater's bookshelf, although I certainly don't agree with his goals. Eliminate violence?? A product of the '70s gosh-aren't-sports-violent school, he wants less violence to reduce injuries. (I want more to improve the gene pool). Even so, he includes an incredible number of well-documented intense tales of on & off-field mayhem.

KESSA by Steven Levenkron (Popular Library, 1986)
teen anorexia
The sequel to THE BEST LITTLE GIRL IN THE WORLD (MCBF #2) finds darling little Kessa out of the hospital & pondering the question: To Gain or Not to Gain? Sadly, she spends too much time flashing back to those good old anorexic days in TBLGITW & dissecting her family with the aide of her Levenkron alter-ego shrink. Only real kicks is when a bulimic buddy goes on a final binge & shocks Kessa back the world of the weighty.

THE EYE by Bill Pronzini & John Lutz (Mysterious Press, 1984)
mystery
The psycho-killer theme's been done to death, the psych-playing-God routine still packs a punch. Here, the psycho spies on an Upper West Side neighborhood from the safety of his Jersey pad via his trusty telescope. If what he sees pleases him not, well, yet another reason for Manhattanites to had bridge & tunnel people. Call it a reverse REAR WINDOW.

ZODIAC by Robert Graysmith (Berkeley, 1987)
true crime
The Zodiac Killer's definitely one of the more interesting of the recent crop of unapprehended mass murderers. In the early '70s, he bagged at least 6 in & around SF. He drove the police crazy with a series of taunting, partially encoded front-page letters to the papers. (Good eye for publicity, there). Graysmith covers the whole circus in admirable detail, from info on all possible victims (may run as high as 46) to reprinting every word Z every wrote. Wisely, no wise-ass solutions. Good stuff.

GRANTA #22 (Penguin, Autumn, 1987)
literary magazine
An odd item to review here, but then it's no ordinary lit mag. For openers, the cover features a few sneering Brit punks. And it actually makes money, probably because the stories move from point A to point B instead of dithering away in increasingly small (but well-written!) circles. Even some items of genuine interest: true tale of escape from Idi Amin's Uganda, a bit on the Enola Gay pilot. Bulk of it, though, really should only appeal to those young

modern culture vultures who live for Vintage Contemporaries & foreign films.

COLLISION COURSE by Nigel Hinton (Dell, 1979)
teen guilt
Yes, yet another addition to that rapidly growing sub-genre. This time, our hero, joy-riding on a motorcycle, manages to ice an old lady. Serves him right for not wearing a helmet, I say. He almost gets away with it, in spite of himself, until he makes a magnificent blunder. Unfortunately, he's too much of a twit to be more than mildly amusing.

THE SCANDALOUS SCAMPS by Harold Mehling (Ace, 1959)
true crime
A excellent collection of entrepreneurs making it via the "sucker born every minute" route. No short cons -- most of these guys are either playing for big scores (Andrew Carnegie's "illegitimate daughter") or setting up bilking schemes on a massive scale (cars running on water, virility via "goat gland" transplants). There must be at least one every minute.

SHOWER OF BLESSINGS by Jim Bakker (PTL, 1986)
religion
Vintage Bakker before the fall, revealing the Lord's plan for your financial salvation: "Seed Faith". Send as much, if not more, that you can to the PTL in the spirit of true Christian giving. God will see that you get back even more, in cold hard cash in this lifetime!! (No waiting for the hereafter with Jim!) He also reprints dozens of letters from the faithful, saying that it's exactly so.

KILLERS UNKNOWN by John Godwin (Collier, 1962)
true crime
For once, an unsolved crime book not harping on Jack the Ripper. Godwin has come up with an interesting mix of the widely known (William Desmond Taylor) & some obscure, but deserving cases (Shirley Collins of Australia). Each is fascinating, & Godwin does a excellent, detailed job on each, with only sound speculation allowed. No half assed solutions, thank God.

SNAKE HANDLERS: GOD FEARERS OR FANATICS? (Nelson, 1974)
religion
This is result of taking the Bible too literally. A verse in Mark makes a passing reference: "They shall take up serpents". So these people do it, with style, playing with rattlers, copperheads, & even cobras for God. For variety, they cast out demons, drink strychnine, & talk in tongues. Text wise, the book is skimpy -- objective, though the authors clearly sympathize. They more than compensate by the appendix, "100 Exciting Photos of Serpent Handling", demonstrating once & for all the horrors of inbreeding.

HOW TO PUBLISH A FANZINE by Mike Gunderloy (Loompanics, 1988)

OK -- no more questions, campers. Mr. FACTSHEET FIVE has all the answers on how to do it the right way. Not only will you be able to leave me alone, but you will also avoid all the goofs I made in my rookie years.

BODY SNATCHERS, STIFFS, & OTHER GHOULISH DELIGHTS by Frederick Drimmer (Ballantine, 1987)

sorta true crime

Hardcore fringe buffs will no doubt recognize Drimmer from his classic freak book, VERY SPECIAL PEOPLE. Here, he maintains his high standards, this time talking about action beyond the grave: tales of corpses, mummies, body-snatchers, medical students, & embalmers. Included are such prominent specimen collectors as Burke & Hare, & the post-mortem sagas of the remians of Julia Pastrama, the Hottentot Venus, & the Irish Giant. It isn't over just because you think it's over.

RE/SEARCH #11: PRANKS! ($20 to RE/SEARCH/ 20 Romolo St., Ste. B/ San Francisco, CA 94133)

If you're expecting chestnuts like "Prince Albert in the can", you'll be disappointed. The good folks at RE/SEARCH, in this book of interviews, have uncovered people who have risen the simple prank to an art form: Boyd Rice, presenting Betty Ford with a skinned sheep's head; Jeffrey Vallance, holding a formal funeral at a pet cemetery for a Foster Farms Fryer; Jello Biafra, running for Mayor of San Francisco; an so on. Also confessions of malicious wit from such notable "enemies of the conditioned reflex" as John Waters, Henry Rollins, Mark Pauline, Abbie Hoffman, Paul Krassner, Karen Finley ... as usual, absolutely mandatory.

MURDER... IN FULL VIEW by J.D. Forbes (Flagship, 1968)

mystery

A so-so mystery, but of interest for the setting: the secretive summer retreat of an exclusive men's club, obviously modelled on SF's Bohemian Club. An interesting, behind the scenes look at what really goes on up there (author had been a guest several times). Sorry, all you conspiracy buffs -- plots for world domination are not part of the scheduled entertainment.

THEY LIVED ON HUMAN FLESH by E.H. Lopez (Pocket, 1973)

non-fiction

An unauthorized version of ALIVE, about the plane-crash soccer team in the Andes chowing each other down. As such, it isn't as long, or as deep, but no apologies are made, & the gruesome details are harped on. And how can you resist a title like this?

GAMBLERS ANONYMOUS HANDBOOK 3rd Edition

The handbook of the Las Vegas answer to Alchoholics Anonymous, obviously. First half is dull, organizational chit chat: how it started, how it works, what to expect, the 12 steps. Yawn. But then, the second half -- "Personal Stories" -- zowie! Give these guys a line of credit & a pair of dice, & you have the stuff of confession magazine editors nightmares -- "No one can be that nutty". but they are. "Little Miss Marker" is nothing more than a damn good idea to these people.

John Marr
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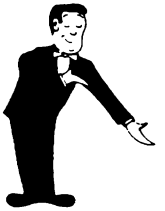
San Francisco, CA 94109



RAIL TANK CAR CASE. One August day, a crew of four employees was assigned the task of removing an inert powder from a tank car. The job began in the early morning and by the time the workers took their first break, it was hot and humid inside the car. One of the employees thought it would be a good idea to ventilate the car while they were on break. He coupled a length of hose to the plant air system, tossed it down the man-way and went for a cup of coffee.

Unknown to the work crew, certain plant processes had to be maintained at constant pneumatic pressure. To assure this, a back-up system of compressed nitrogen cylinders was connected to the plant air line through a solenoid valve. If the compressor failed, the solenoid opened, allowing the nitrogen to flow into the line. The employees did not know that the compressor was being overhauled that day.

The crew returned and prepared to resume work. As soon as the first worker's head cleared the man-way, he collapsed and fell to the bottom of the car. A second employee, seeing that the first was in trouble, also entered and collapsed with his head falling on the first victim's chest. The third employee, thinking victim number two was checking for vital signs, also entered and collapsed. The fourth employee, seeing the pile of unresponsive bodies on the bottom of the car, suspected an air contaminant. He ran to get a gas mask.

As he returned to the car, he was stopped by the plant nurse who asked what was going on. When he explained, the nurse instructed him to use a self contained breathing apparatus rather than a gas mask. He put on a SCBA but was startled to discover that he couldn't fit through the narrow manway with the tank on his back. While keeping the facepiece on, he removed the tank so it could be passed down to him once he entered the car.

Not being trained in the use of the SCBA, he opened the emergency bypass valve rather than the control valve. The continuous flow of high pressure air, coupled with a poor facepiece seal, caused the air to be quickly expended while he was inside the car. He, too, was overcome.

By the time the fire department arrived, the workers had been in the car for about 15 to 20 minutes. Fortunately, no one died. A four-inch bottom outlet valve had been left open, and by coincidence, all of the victims fell in the vicinity of the valve opening. Apparently, there was enough outside air diffusing in that no one was permanently injured.